

Nutrition Promotion

The school environment should encourage students to make healthy eating choices. Schools can engage in a variety of activities that promote healthy behaviors.

Smarter Lunchrooms

The U.S. Department of Agriculture encourages schools to utilize [Smarter Lunchroom](#) techniques to encourage students to make healthy food choices. Smarter Lunchrooms use research-based principles that lead children to make healthy choices but still offer a full spectrum of choice. All Smarter Lunchroom techniques are low- or no-cost, sustainable, and focus on improving the lunchroom environment to promote healthful eating behaviors. Schools can choose to implement techniques from any of the five areas of intervention: fruits, vegetables, targeted entrées, reimbursable meals, and/or dairy.

[Smarter Lunchroom Areas of Intervention](#)

Each area of intervention has multiple best practice recommendations and strategies for implementation. To view all best practices and associated implementation strategies, visit <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/ideas>. Sample strategies include:

- Use descriptive and imaginative language to describe fruits and vegetables on the menu.
- Display fruit in decorative bowls near the cashier.
- Place the salad bar near the cashier, rather than away from the main serving area.
- Move competitive foods behind the serving counter so they are only available by request.

Student Rewards

Rewards can be an effective way to promote positive student behavior. Often times, schools will use food to reward students. However, using food as a reward undermines nutrition education being taught and promotes the consumption of unhealthy foods. Consider using a different reward system, such as stickers or additional time for recess to award student achievement.

[Alternatives to Food as Reward](#)

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The local wellness policy must include goals for nutrition promotion. Schools should use evidenced-based strategies to improve wellness.



School Garden

School gardens are an excellent way to promote healthy food choices. Research has shown that involving children in gardening is an excellent way to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. School gardens range from large in-ground gardens to classroom container gardening.

Farm to School Program

A farm to school program provides an opportunity to promote healthy food and beverage choices. There are several ways to incorporate farm to school activities in your district.

- Incorporate local produce into the school menu.
- Implement a Harvest of the Month program, featuring local produce.
- Organize educational activities, such as a farm tour or farmer visit.
- Conduct a local foods taste test.

Sample Goals and Objectives

Goal 1:

- *The school district will engage in a farm to school program to help students eat more nutritious foods, promote healthier eating patterns, and support local farmers.*

Objectives:

- *The school nutrition program will menu at least one local food per month.*
- *The school staff shall integrate three farm to school activities into existing curricula at all grade levels each year.*

Goal 2:

- *The school district will support practices that promote good nutrition choices.*

Objectives:

- *The school staff will use alternatives to food as rewards for positive student behavior.*

Smarter Lunchroom Areas of Intervention

Area of Intervention	Best Practice #1	Best Practice #2	Best Practice #3
Fruit	Use signs and verbal prompts to draw attention and encourage selection	Display the whole fruit	Display fruit by the register
Targeted Entrée	Display targeted names outside of cafeteria	Display targeted names on serving line	Make entrée first or most prominent in line
Vegetable	Display targeted names outside of cafeteria	Create a student action committee	
Reimbursable Meal	Create a healthy-items only convenience line	Move competitive foods behind the line	
Dairy	Place milk first in line	Make sure white milk accounts for at least 1/3 of all milk	Place white milk in front of flavored milk



Alternatives to Food as Rewards

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The following is a list of non-food rewards.

Elementary School

- Extra recess time
- Make deliveries to the office
- Listen to music
- Watch a fun movie
- Class outdoors
- Be a classroom helper
- Sit by friends
- Lunch outside
- Extra art, reading, or music time
- Trip to reward bin with non-food items (e.g., pencils, bookmarks, stickers, puzzles, etc.)

Middle and High School

- Listen to music while working
- No homework pass
- Free time at the end of class
- Extra credit
- Free passes to school events
- Computer time
- Field trip
- Assembly
- School themed merchandise
- Coupons for donated prizes (water bottles, movie passes, etc.)

